

*"I wish to commend L G & E on their prompt service and consideration beyond the call of duty . . ."**

An army, it is said, moves on its stomach. The army that worked day and night to restore gas and electric service to the community was no different.

The job of feeding this army during the early days of the crisis, when time was too precious for breakfast, lunch and dinner breaks, fell to P. C. Smither, Jr., and W. E. Anderson, who run L G & E's Stores Department.

The first meal in the field was breakfast on Thursday, the morning after the storm. "Breakfast is an almost impossible meal to deliver hot in the field," Smither said.

By Friday, when out-of-state crews were on the job, the total number of meals being provided in the field had risen to 450. Before the crisis situation had ended, 3250 meals were served, supplemented with 180 dozen donuts and about 5900 cups of coffee, according to Smither.

"We had a problem of keeping the food hot and of finding the crews in the field when we had meals for them," Anderson added.

Fast-food restaurants provided most of the meals, and when L G & E picked up the dinner check for the whole program, it totaled nearly \$6,000.

Anderson and Smither also supervised the job of getting out materials and supplies from the warehouse to the field.

"We put in a lot of hours, but our job was easy compared to the actual repair work," Anderson recalled. "I don't see how the fellows out in the field kept going."

*"I must take this opportunity to thank all of the workers at L G & E who worked so heroically since Wednesday afternoon. Our lights came on just as we were moving to a downtown hotel because it got so cold. We don't know how your men accomplished the almost impossible, but they did . . ."**

"We used the fireplace for heat and cooking. We used an hibachi and my husband manufactured a stove for cooking wieners and toast and warming water. When it got dark, he would go to bed and I would write letters or read the paper by candlelight. It was kind of an interesting experience all along, and it was kind of nice to get out of the TV habit."

Dr. and Mrs. Harry A. Pfingst's "interesting experience" ended when the lights came on at their home at 199 Westwind in Rolling Fields at 4 p.m. Wednesday,

April 17 — almost exactly two weeks after the electricity went off. They were among the last to have service restored.

"We didn't have much damage and just preferred to stay here and take care of our house," Mrs. Pfingst said. "Our baby granddaughter was here the first week, and we would put her bed near the fireplace. It only got really cold two nights, and we just wore warm clothes to bed."

Her attitude was by no means shared by all of those who waited up to two weeks for electrical service to be restored.

"We've frozen at night," complained one customer who declined to be identified by name. "And we got terribly tired of eating out three meals a day."

He and his wife and their 11-year-old son moved their beds into the living room where the fireplace provided heat. And they used portable fluorescent lights.

"Some nights it has gotten down to 30 degrees," he said.

But their ordeal, and the ordeal of the last handful of customers stranded without electrical service, ended on Wednesday, April 17.

For Louisville Gas & Electric Company, several ordeals still remained.

Temporary patchwork jobs, a compromise to restore service as quickly as possible, would have to be replaced by permanent repairs on a systematic basis. This could take months.

The company's most ambitious construction program in six years would have to be set back weeks or months because supplies intended for use in this program were consumed in the all-out repair effort.

And those supplies would have to be re-ordered in a period of spiraling prices and widespread scarcity.

Manager of Purchasing Urban L. Kuhn and his buying group worked long hours both to replenish scarce supplies during the tornado cleanup and to replace them when the crisis was over. "Members of the buying group really demonstrated their ability when the emergency arose," said Kuhn.

"We used up approximately 2,500 ten-inch suspension insulators in that storm," he said. "The lead time on replacement right now is 80 weeks, and we get no guarantee on price."

That item cost \$3.60 in 1973. In early 1974 the price was \$4.55, and by April it had risen to \$5.35.

Delivery time on orders of wooden poles like those shattered by the tornado was 15 months, and a shortage of rail cars further complicated that schedule.

"A pole that we paid \$48 for not too long ago now is \$97, and many of those broken were bought at \$20 several years ago and will be replaced by \$100 poles," Kuhn added.

But L G & E pleaded for — and received — immediate delivery on sixty 65-foot poles from an Alabama firm. A Louisville contractor provided two tractor trailers and drivers for the emergency shipment. Other pole suppliers also cooperated. And several Louisville suppliers opened their warehouses Wednesday night to provide materials needed immediately.

"We found this kind of cooperation wherever we turned," Kuhn remarked. "People did everything they could to help, and we were getting expedited shipments through air freight to keep those crews supplied."

He was hoping this kind of cooperation also would be extended by the suppliers as the company prepared to replenish its inventory after the storm. While it didn't share the urgency of the tornado repair work, this task also was monumental, because the undertaking stripped the L G & E warehouse of such things as a staggering 142 miles of wire, 500 poles and 200 distribution transformers.

All told, the tornado cost to L G & E may reach about \$2 million, making it the most expensive disaster in the company's history.

A sense of pride understandably runs through the entire L G & E organization as its people recall how they were asked to do — and did — the impossible in early April, 1974.

Bill Beard may have expressed it best when he said:

"These people are phenomenal. They will gripe and moan about little things, but when the chips are down, I've never seen anything like it. I'm really proud to be associated with the whole spirit of things in the entire company; I don't know how you'd beat it anywhere else."

At least some of the customers agree:

*"I am writing this to let you know how fantastic you people were. I know that you have a great deal to do and will continue to have for quite some time. I just want you to know that your efforts are noticed and much appreciated."**



A weary worker is almost finished.

*Excerpts from letters regarding storm efforts. With the exception of the excerpts commending the activity of Kentucky Power crews, all of the material was

taken from the many letters sent Louisville Gas & Electric Co. by appreciative customers.